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IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-2. (Canceled).

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said converting step includes identifying a file that is not convertible as an exception file.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, further comprising a step of: displaying summary statistics prior to said outputting step.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 4, wherein said step of displaying comprises:

displaying a series of parent-child relationships between a file and an attachment to said file said parent-child relationship being a document context.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein at least said converting step is a step performed in a software plug-in module.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said metadata comprises:

date created, last date opened, last date modified, creator name, matter name, and predetermined identification and quality control data.

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Claim 8. (Cancelled).

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of converting further comprises: marking a file that cannot be converted as an exception file.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of physically loading and copying comprises:

transferring via a drag-and-drop user interface comprising one of a computer mouse and a pointing device.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said working copy comprises:

a time-stamped audit file configured to record a file history spanning file creation to file destruction.

Claim 12. (Cancelled)

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 49[[12]], further comprising: performing page counts and time stamping/digital authentication of said output file.

Claim 14. (Cancelled).

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Claim 15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 9, wherein said file that cannot be converted comprises one of:

- a file with a virus;
- an encrypted file;
- a corrupted file;
- an unknown file-type; and
- a deselected file.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 9, wherein said step of marking a file that cannot be converted comprises one of:

- logging said exception file; and
- exporting said exception file.

Claim 17. (Cancelled)

Claim 18. (Cancelled)

Claim 19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of converting comprises:

- time stamping and digitally authenticating both an image and a file of extracted meta-data.

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Claim 20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of converting comprises one of:

- time stamping or digitally authenticating the output file; and
- appending selected meta-data.

Claim 21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 20, wherein said step of converting comprises:

- creating one or more searchable subordinate text files containing the contents of an operator-selected subset of the selected files;
- time stamping or digitally authenticating the one or more subordinate text files; and
- appending selected meta-data about the files included in the subordinate text files.

Claim 22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, further comprising:  
extracting one of file content data, content header information, file meta-data, file type information, and file characteristic data.

Claim 23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said associated meta-data comprises:

- predetermined categories of meta-data corresponding to a file-type.

Claim 24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, wherein said step of time stamping comprises:

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time stamping with one of UTC time and another predetermined time zone.

Claim 25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of extracting text comprises:

creating an ASCII file of said subset of text.

Claim 26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25, wherein said step of extracting text further comprises:

converting said image of said selected file to text with an OCR program if an ASCII file cannot be created.

Claim 27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of extracting text comprises:

searching for a key word.

Claim 28. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of extracting text comprises:

extracting a portion of text around said keyword.

Claim 29. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of processing and converting comprises:

processing with a prioritization scheme keyed to file type.

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Claim 30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 29, wherein said step of processing with a prioritization scheme comprises:

processing by one of file extension and file header with a plug-in module.

Claim 31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said step of processing with a plug-in module comprises:

processing with a plug-in module configured to be selected to be 'ON' or 'OFF.'

Claim 32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said step of processing with a plug-in module comprises:

processing with a plug-in module configured to have a user-selectable priority.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 29, wherein said step of processing with a prioritization scheme keyed to file type comprises at least one of:

identifying a file type extension; and

evaluating a binary file header.

Claim 34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 33, wherein said step of processing with a prioritization scheme keyed to file type comprises one of:

identifying said file type extension and evaluating the binary header when the file type extension is unknown; and

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evaluating the binary header, and if there is a conflict between the binary header and the file-type extension, one of the binary header or the file-type extension is considered a default first choice, either arbitrarily or based on a predetermined logic keyed to a predetermined file type.

Claim 35. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein said step of processing with a plug-in module comprises one of:

processing with a plug-in configured to open multiple file types;

processing with multiple plug-ins configured to open a single file-type;

processing with a plug-in created by incorporating a library of a commercially available software product; and

processing with a plug-in comprising a library of programming code that incorporates functionality of a third party library or an application to load, image and extract metadata from a document.

Claim 36. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 29, wherein said step of processing with a prioritization scheme keyed to file type comprises:

reading a file that is correlated to a plug-in,

Claim 37. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 36, wherein said step of processing with a prioritization scheme keyed to a file type comprises:

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reading a file that cannot be processed by the plug-in by using a Microsoft Windows File Type Association and accessing a Windows registry to determine if a "print" verb is associated with the extension in Windows;

if said "print" verb is found to be associated with the extension, starting a new Windows process with said "print" verb as startup information and feeding the output of said new Windows process to an imaging print driver.

Claim 38. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of converting comprises:

imaging with an imaging driver.

Claim 39. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3, wherein said step of outputting comprises:

exporting to at least one of an image viewer, a printer, a computer and another media.

Claim 40. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 39, wherein said step of outputting comprises:

exporting the output file comprising a predetermined litigation support software file type.

Claim 41. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 40, wherein said predetermined litigation support software file type comprises one of:



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an IPRO file type, an Opticon file type, a Concordance file type, a Summation file type, a Ringtail file type, a Microsoft Access file type, and other data management file types.

Claims 42-43. (Canceled).

Claim 44. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, further comprising:  
pre-filtering and saving pre-filtering criteria.

Claim 45. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 49, wherein said step of  
physically loading and copying comprises:

accessing data from an email or instant messaging archive.

Claim 46. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 45, wherein said step of  
accessing data from an email or instant message archive comprises:

accessing a printable attachment of an email or instant message.

Claims 47-48. (Canceled).

Claim 49. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of processing and  
converting electronically-stored data for electronic discovery in support of litigation, comprising:

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physically loading and copying data and associated meta-data into a processor-based device by a user at a user-site from one or more data storage devices located at the user-site, said processor-based device being located at said user-site;

inputting from the user on-site user input to said processor-based device for subsequent processing at [[a]]the user-site of a working copy of the data and associated meta-data, said subsequent processing including storing in a local storage device said data and associated meta-data as the working copy for file processing, while maintaining a document context with respect to other documents, said working copy of the data including a plurality of files;

said file processing of the plurality of files in the working copy of the data including;

identifying a duplication of one or more files within the working copy of the data,  
including

identifying a duplication by a hash algorithm,

checking a duplicate file for file corruption, and

exporting a duplicated file, and

converting a selected file to an output file in a user-specified format with said processor-based device if said selected file is convertible to the user-specified format, said step of converting including

extracting and saving file meta-data associated with said selected file,

extracting text from said selected file, and

creating an image of said selected file,

and said file processing further including [[at least one of]]

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checking for a virus and removing ~~[[a]]the~~ virus from one or more files,

and

checking for ~~[[encoding or]]~~ encryption of one or more files, and

~~[[decoding or]]~~ decrypting said one or more files if ~~[[encoded or]]~~ encrypted; and

outputting the output file in the user-specified export format for at least one of exporting, reviewing and searching the output file in an external system, wherein said steps of physically loading and copying, inputting, converting, processing and converting, and outputting being performed by said processor-based device at said user-site.

Claim 50. (Currently Amended) A system for processing and converting electronically-stored data for electronic discovery in support of litigation, comprising:

a data input device configured to allow a user to physically load and copy data and associated meta-data at a user-site from one or more data storage devices located at the user-site into a processor-based device located at said user-site;

an interface configured to receive on-site user input into said processor-based device for subsequent file processing at the user-site of a working copy of the data and associated meta-data;

a processor configured to store in a local storage device said data and associated meta-data as the working copy, while maintaining a document context with respect to the other documents, said working copy of the data including a plurality of files,

said file processing of the plurality of files in the working copy of the data including;

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identifying a duplication of one or more files within the working copy of the data,  
including

identifying a duplication by a hash algorithm,  
checking a duplicate file for file corruption, and  
exporting a duplicated file, and

said processor also configured to convert a selected file to an output file in a user-specified format if said selected file is convertible to a user-specified format, said  
converting including

extracting and saving file meta-data associated with said selected file,  
extracting text from said selected file, and  
creating an image of said selected file, said processor being inside said

processor-based device, and

said file processing further including [[at least one of]]

checking for a virus and removing [[a]] the virus from one or more files,  
and

checking for [[encoding or]] encryption of one or more files, and  
[[decoding or]] decrypting said one or more files if [[encoded or]] encrypted; and

an output mechanism configured to output the output file in the user-specified export  
format for at least one of exporting, reviewing and searching the output file in an external  
system, wherein said data input device, said interface, and said processor inside said processor-  
based device being located on said user-site.

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Claim 51. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium including instructions that when executed by a computer, controlling the computer so as to process and convert electronically-stored data for electronic discovery in support of litigation, the instructions comprising steps of:

physically loading and copying data and associated meta-data into a processor-based device by a user at a user-site from one or more data storage devices located at the user-site, said processor-based device being located at said user-site;

inputting from the user on-site user input to said processor-based device for subsequent processing at the user-site of a working copy of the data and associated meta-data, said subsequent processing including

storing in a local storage device said data and associated meta-data as the working copy for file processing, while maintaining a document context with respect to other documents, said working copy of the data including a plurality of files;

said file processing of the plurality of files in the working copy of the data including identifying a duplication of one or more files within the working copy of the data, including

identifying a duplication by a hash algorithm,  
checking a duplicate file for file corruption, and  
exporting a duplicated file, and

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converting a selected file to an output file in a user-specified format with said computer if said selected file is convertible to the user-specified format, said step of converting including

extracting and saving file meta-data associated with said selected file,

extracting text from said selected file, and

creating an image of said selected file,

and said file processing further including [[at least one of]]

checking for and removing a virus from one or more files, and

checking for [[encoding or]] encryption of one or more files, and

[[decoding or]] decrypting said one or more files if [[encoded or]] encrypted; and

outputting the output file in the user-specified export format for at least one of exporting, reviewing and searching the output file in an external system, wherein said steps of physically loading and copying, inputting, converting, processing and converting, and outputting being performed by said processor-based device at said user-site.